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## Poems

Editorial Staff

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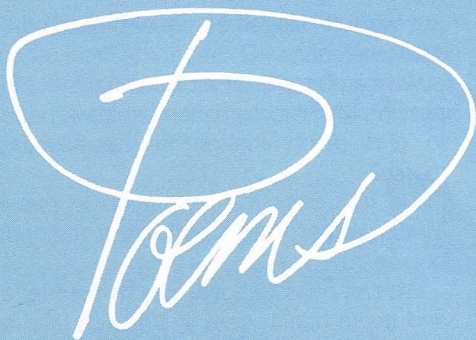
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### Black Smile

I am black  
But I carry a smile  
That reflects me.  
And I like what I see.  
For I am black and I am me.

I am black, as black as I can be.  
And I'm not going to hide  
the black you see.  
For I carry a smile.  
That reflects love, joy, and peace.  
And I want the whole world to see  
That I am black,  
And I am me.

Gerald Franks  
Washington, D. C.

### The King Sits Across from the Corner Market

Serfs and nobles alike find him there—  
bright & early—most everyday.  
Unless it rains/Royalty abhors rain.  
Squat atop his narrow wooden throne,  
a plank by any other name, the  
King tolerates the gabby court  
jesters (who look remarkably  
like him).

Breezes flap the sparse leaves of his  
private shade tree (and his only pair  
of grey gabs).

It is rooted in soil long since dead,  
like his Rule.

And (he thinks) passersby are subjects.  
The King hails heartily for quarters  
and cigarettes.

Taxes for the kingdom.  
Colored glass litters his courtyard:  
Diamonds.

Rubies.

Precious jewels chipped from containers  
of cheap reeking rotgut.

The King stays burnt.

It melts his brain.

Scalds his eyes.

Hallucinations are reality:

He believes his is free/free to run his  
own life.

Sad sorry Sovereign.

Controlling only his right hand (Sceptre  
laid aside momentarily) as it lifts  
& pours death (he doesn't seem to  
notice) down his throat.

Ordinarily, that hand shakes, bad!

So the King wisely leaves his crown  
at home wrapped delicately in a  
blue Banlon (he alternates with  
his red).

It is lighter than ermine and wearing  
pullovers makes him feel more like  
common men and women to whom  
he must never reveal his blood line.

So the King begs to keep them off guard.

The peons smirk.

If they only knew,

If they only knew.

Peter Harris  
Baltimore, Md.

### The Struggle

Sometimes when the balls of life  
become too great to juggle,  
I pray that tomorrow will die in the  
night—

Ending forever my dismal plight.  
But when I wake, dawn smiles.

She reveals no signs to my eyes—  
Only more uncertain miles.

Yet I rise,  
And resume the struggle.

Wilma D. Perry  
Silver Spring, Md.

### Another Revolutionary

There he is upon my screen,  
a wild-haired, glary-eyed, sputtering  
revolutionary, citing  
and berating wrongs he's seen:  
drug-wasted youths and workless men,  
children who are used to "Nope!"  
whose guts are filled with gas and hope.  
These things will change once he's  
spoken.

Am I perturbed by this drivell?  
My hair is styled, my clothes the best,  
my life's a comfort; thus my mien civil.

Yet this silky tie seems a cinch,  
my stomach growls, my bowels  
protest—  
some baking soda, in a pinch.

Craig A. Reynolds  
Friendly, Md.

### Retrospection

The desert flower that pushes through  
the sand,

Demands its season in the universe;  
And yearns for rain, in which it can  
immerse

Its fragile petals, like a gentle hand,  
Before its bloom commences to disband.

Man also has his seasons, some  
adverse—

And good or bad, his deeds cannot  
reverse

The list of things that he would  
countermand.

And if he could, the insights he  
would gain,

Would not restore him to his rightful  
place.

And though he would strive harder  
to attain

A somewhat more ennobled state  
of grace.

He still should have good reason  
to redraft

The folly of his ill-wrought handicraft.

Rollin C. Williams  
Salem, Conn.



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